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Thematic village as the new anchor for local development. A lesson from Masłomęcz, Poland

PAULINA TOBIASZ-LIS, MARCIN WÓJCIK, KAROLINA DMOCHOWSKA-DUDEK, PAMELA JEZIORSKA-BIEL

Abstract

The essence of the problem presented in the paper is to identify social activities focused on rural renewal as exemplified by developing the thematic Village of Goths and their various cultural, economic and landscape effects. The village of Masłomęcz (Lubelskie Voivodeship) was selected, out of over 50 active thematic villages in Poland, especially for that purpose. It well presents the ongoing changes beyond peripherally located areas of problematic social environment and complicated history. The village shares a problem of a post-war settlement of people from various parts of the country and their long and painful adjustment to the new living environment. The process of overcoming the cultural non-adjustment of the population to space lasted for years, with its negative aspects involving the destruction of cultural heritage due to lack of awareness of its value, or merely lack of knowledge and appropriate skills.

The paper is based on data gathered both in the field (observation, individual in-depth interviews, focus group, research walk) and along the desk research (the study of literature, documents on local development strategies). The multithreaded analysis on a local scale of the village and its nearest neighbourhood enabled presenting the anatomy of actions undertaken to create the thematic Village of Goths in Masłomęcz and its effects on the local community, economy and space.

Thematic village; local development; place attachment; rural space

Zusammenfassung

Das Themendorf als neuer Ankerpunkt für lokale Entwicklung. Ein Lehrstück aus Masłomęcz (Polen)

Das Hauptanliegen des in der Veröffentlichung dargestellten Problems besteht darin, soziale Aktivitäten zu ermitteln, die auf ländliche Umstrukturierung am Beispiel der Entwicklung eines Themendorfes der Goten ausgerichtet sind, mit unterschiedlichen Auswirkungen auf Kultur, Wirtschaft und Landschaft. Speziell zu diesem Zweck wurde das Dorf Masłomęcz (Lubelskie Voivodeship) aus über 50 aktiven Themendörfern in Polen ausgewählt. Es dient als Beispiel für laufende Veränderungen über peripher gelegene Bereiche in einem problematischen sozialen Umfeld mit komplizierter Geschichte hinaus. Das Dorf teilt das Problem der Ansiedlung von Menschen aus verschiedenen Teilen des Landes nach dem Krieg und ihrer langen und schmerzhaften Anpassung an die neue Lebensumgebung. Der Prozess der Überwindung der kulturellen Nichtanpassung der Bevölkerung an den Lebensraum dauerte viele Jahre. Zu den negativen Aspekten gehören in diesem Zusammenhang auch die Zerstörung des kulturellen Erbes aufgrund von mangelndem Bewusstsein für dessen Wert oder einfach aus Unkenntnis und Mangel an entsprechenden Fähigkeiten.

Die Arbeit basiert auf Daten, die sowohl in der Feldforschung (Beobachtung, detaillierte Einzelgespräche, Schwerpunktgruppe, Erkundungsgänge) als auch durch Sekundärforschung (Literaturrecherche, Dokumente zu lokalen Entwicklungsstrategien) gesammelt wurden. Die vielschichtige Analyse auf lokaler Ebene eines Dorfes und seiner nächsten Nachbarschaft ermöglichte es, die Anatomie der Maßnahmen zur Schaffung des Themendorfes der Goten in Masłomęcz und deren Auswirkungen auf die lokale Gemeinschaft, die Wirtschaft und den Lebensraum darzustellen.

Themendorf; lokale Entwicklung; Ortsbindung; ländlicher Raum; Polen

Introduction

In Poland, just like in other countries, rural areas are in the time of transition. Facing challenges among which the most important are declining and ageing populations, problems with youth retention, limited economic and social opportunities for residents, loss of local services and higher costs of living, rural communities repositing themselves through diversifying their economic base, enhancing the quality of life and seeking for new functions and roles. Since the beginning of the market economy in the 1990s, we have observed the emergence of a multifunctional rural regime in Poland, which influences new non-productive functions in local economies and new lifestyles reflected in the rural landscape. The parallel core process within these transformations is the empowerment of local communities, and thus reinforcement of social and territorial identity. However, it has to be stressed that these processes are complicated, difficult in view of the economic crisis of that period, bad living conditions and a number of other phenomena, which turned out to be a frequent obstacle for the real social change, based on the recovering of the cultural identity, including pride in the place, feeling of one's own value, conviction of the qualities of the countryside (BUKRABA-RYLSKA 1992).

The success of the transformation was visible in many areas, especially the peripheral and delayed ones, and became truly possible only in connection with the acquisition of the structural funds from the EU directed at the strengthening of the social capital and at revitalisation and broadly understood rural renewal (CZAPIEWSKI 2010; FEDYSZAK-RADZIEJOWSKA 2010; JEZIORSKA-BIEL and PSYK-PIOTROWSKA 2012, IDZIAK and WILCZYŃSKI 2013). The ideologically motivated discrimination against the countryside, where the strong ethos of peasantry and rural community persisted, was the source of appearance of the social feeling of inferiority, shame, and – consequently – adoption of models, imitating the urban ones, both in the sphere of space management (e.g. abandonment

of regionalism in the architecture) and in the socio-cultural sphere – primarily as regards the weakening of the system of rural values. On the other hand, in the already quite long period of transformation and Poland's European experience, during which the consecutive generation of Poles matured, there have been some examples of good practices and social initiatives, oriented at stimulating the community and neighbourhood activity, at renewing rural space and at promoting rural values. The effects of the socio-economic transformation and European experience of Polish villages are particularly well-visible in the areas for many years considered to be problematic, mainly regarding their socio-cultural aspects. Such a village – Masłomęcz – is presented here as a case study.

This paper aims to focus on the idea of thematic villages, which may lead to widely understood rural renewal reflected by multifunctional development, redefining local identity and strong place attachment in areas that are economically and socially impoverished. We will identify both promoters and inhibitors in the process of developing an active, thematic Goth Village with our special attention paid to mobilisation and coordination of local physical and human resources supported by external incentives, which resulted in a set of positive changes: cultural, economic and landscape-related. The uniqueness of this particular initiative undertaken by the local community of Masłomęcz, consists in achieving exceptional effects in local development by strengthening relationships between people and space and overcoming problematic history of the post-war settling of newcomers (following the earlier resettling of the native residents) from various parts of the country and adaptation with respect to the new place of living. In this particular case, along the process of thematisation of rural space, new elements of territorial identification and person-place attachment comes in, freeing new powers in the inhabitants to new actions and, at the same time, forming its new dimensions and contexts.

Thematic villages, showing a relatively long history of both successes and failures in local development (RZEŃCA 2015; ATKOČIŪNIENĖ and KAMINAITĖ 2017), reflect both the emergence of multifunctional rural areas and the search for new anchors of local identities and place attachment. The ways the community defines, celebrates and expresses itself are major contributing factors to its ability to withstand economic, political and cultural transitions. Culture and heritage, which often brings ideas of particular themes for developing thematic spaces, are described not only as features used for improving the quality of life but as a basis for the future of rural communities (CUESTA, GILLESPIE and LILLIS 2005; DUXBURY and CAMPBELL 2011; IDZIAK and WILCZYŃSKI 2015). This paper addresses the contemporary debate about changing rural areas by outlining two key interrelated dynamics, i.e. 1) globalisation and an increasing role of consumption in societies and 2) the cultural potential of rural places (CLOKE, GOODWYN 1992; CHAMPION, HUGO 2004).

Theoretical insights

Local development models

Local development, studied by social sciences since the 1960s, currently comprises numerous different aspects. The classic formulation of rural development dominant in post-war Europe was an exogenous model that put industrialisation at the centre of development. The key principles of this model referred to economies of scale and concentration with the primary function of rural areas in providing food for the expanding cities. Early models of rural renewal implemented since the 1960s in Germany, focused on modernising the countryside and increasing the effectiveness of agricultural production, might serve as an example of an exogenous approach to local development. By the late 1970s, this model had fallen into disrepute. It was criticised as dependent development, reliant on continued subsidies and the policy decisions made by external stakeholders, experts

and planners as well as erasing the cultural and environmental differences of rural areas. Among its side effects observed European-wide were: destruction of traditional rural landscape, depopulation and weakening of social capital. In response, a new – endogenous – development approach was introduced and the strategies of rural renewal started to focus on social and cultural aspects, sustainable development and thematic villages as a tool in this process.

According to the endogenous development approach, specific natural, human and cultural resources of an area hold the key to its sustainable development. Whereas the exogenous rural development model saw its key challenge in overcoming rural differences and distinctiveness through modernisation of physical infrastructure and the promotion of universal values, the endogenous development model saw the key challenge in the nurturing of locally distinctive human and environmental capacities (SHUCKSMITH 2000; IDZIAK and WILCZYŃSKI 2015). Endogenous development “subscribes to a belief in the innate capacity of people in a locality to discover within themselves and their locality the means for the improvement of their socio-economic well-being.” (RAY 2000, p. 447) As synonyms for the term “endogenous” in this context he offers the terms “bottom-up”, “grassroots” and “participation” (RAY 2000, p. 447). Three fundamental aspects have summarised the endogenous development approach in the rural context: 1) the territorial instead of the sectoral frame, 2) valorising and exploiting of local physical and human resources, and 3) focus on “needs, capacities and perspectives of local people” (RAY 2000). Thereby, the aim of endogenous development is not only to support economic expansion and job creation (RAY 1999) but also to support and preserve local distinctiveness.

It should be mentioned, that in Poland, similarly to other post-socialist countries, new paradigms for regional and local development appeared with a delay. This was mainly due to ideological factors whose impact weakened along with the

transformation and democratisation of political and social structures. Within the last 30 years, social sciences in Poland have been subject to a theoretical and methodological revolution, manifested primarily in the interest of culture in various contexts and dimensions (TOBIASZ-LIS, WÓJCIK 2014).

Some authors (LOWE et al. 1993) have criticised endogenous development ideas. They argue that the notion of local rural areas pursuing development autonomously of outside influences (such as: globalisation, governmental or EU action) may be ideal but is not practical in contemporary Europe. Any locality will include a mix of exogenous and endogenous forces, and the local level must interact with the supra-local level (HIGH and NEMES 2007). The critical point is how to enhance the capacity of local areas to steer these broader processes, resources and actions to their benefit. Recently, an increasing interest in governance dynamics, institutional changes and participation practices has been widely recognised, especially in rural and inner areas. Their development and in particular actions that promote local assets and knowledge enhancement, new possibilities of cooperation, new governance structures at different administrative levels, social innovations and participation are considered as the centre of neo-endogenous development and an essential prerequisite for its success (see further: RELOCAL PROJECT APPLIED UNDER THE HORIZON 2020 FRAMEWORK).

In the neo-endogenous rural development two interrelated notions are central, e.g. local resources and local control. The endogenous part refers to development along the bottom-up approach that is when the search for possible resources and mechanisms focuses on the local territorial level. The “neo” part identifies various manifestations of the supra-local and their roles in local development (RAY 2006, p. 279).

Nowadays, when territories participate in the free movement of goods, services and information, the analyses of local development foundations focus on such issues as:

- impact of the territory (various resources) on the establishment of organisations and institutions (closeness and putting down roots) (SYSSNER 2009; KOCKEL 2002; BISCOE 2001);
- impact of social capital (e.g. knowledge, trust, social organisation) on the success of undertaken development activities;
- relations between local and supra-local (regional and global) functioning of the society (THRIFT 2000; BISCOE 2001; KEATING et al. 2003; SYSSNER 2009).

Taking into account the issues listed above, in the case of the village of Masłomęcz presented in this article, the process of learning and adapting to the new environment started just after World War II with the post-war resettlements of people. Thus, it might serve as a laboratory for following the process of place attachment and the features of the person-place bonds in this particular location and specific conditions among which the establishment of the thematic village seems crucial. Based on local historical assets (impact of the territory) developed thanks to a bottom-up initiative together with the assistance of external actors (the impact of social capital and relations between local and supra-local), it well exemplifies the neo-endogenous concept of local development.

Thematic villages as a tool in the neo-endogenous local development model

Thematisation of space is currently a method, widely commented and described in literature and the media, which makes the “place” (in this case a village) known in a broader scale through development of thematic spaces, amusement parks, cultural events and festivals (see LENGKEEK et al. 1997; BORUTA, MARKOVA 2012; BLICHFELDT, HALKIER 2014; IDZIAK et al. 2015). In a narrow sense, it focuses on selecting a leitmotif for places, events or persons, which becomes the basis for creating tourist products and serves mainly marketing purposes (IDZIAK 2008, KŁOCZKO-GAJEWSKA 2013). In a broad

sense, and as such it will be presented in this paper, it is a model for the neo-endogenous development of a local (in this case rural) community providing the basis for acquiring, creating and developing local identity and place attachment (DMOCHOWSKA-DUDEK, TOBIASZ-LIS 2017).

In Poland, W. IDZIAK (2008, 2015) examined the origins of the concept of thematic villages in creating new rural tourism experiences and explored the implementation of the concept. In his works, he also discussed the role of community involvement in local development of rural areas. A. KŁOCZKO-GAJEWSKA (2013) collected information about 58 active thematic villages in Poland putting attention to their geographical distribution (concentration in peripheral and underdeveloped regions), scale and activities offered (from small-scale projects to a multicomponent offer), legal situation (established and conducted by local community, NGOs, local authorities, external leaders, etc.; with or without legal personality) and outcomes for local communities (81 % of interviewed respondents underlined landscape-related effects, 76 % noticed changes in social relations, 60 % found new possibilities for additional income thanks to the development of thematic villages in their neighbourhood and 35 % pointed to development of external links with people from outside their villages).

Using examples of Lithuanian villages, V. ATKOČIŪNIENĖ and G. KAMINAITĖ (2017) have presented a set of factors that held back the development of thematic villages (e.g.: lack of information and knowledge, lack of marketing tools, weak public relations, a small number of population interested in rural thematic strategy) as well as drivers of their development (e.g.: development of crafts, local tourism organization and provision of services, fostering folk traditions, presentation of culinary and cultural heritage). The case of the village of Masłomęcz presented in this paper corresponds to the main findings of the Lithuanian research, yet taking into account the local conditions framing this particular initiative, some specific inhibitors and promoters will be further

elaborated in this paper. Above these, the most important issue deriving from this particular action is strengthening of the local community, growth of self-esteem of the inhabitants and their feeling of living “more interesting life”, which contributes positively to the development of local identity and place attachment.

Person-process-place organising framework

Place attachment, understood as particular bonding that occurs between individuals and their meaningful surrounding spaces, has recently gained much scientific attention (e.g. JUNOT, PAQUET, FENOUILLET 2018; LEWICKA 2011, HALPENNY 2010; SCANNELL, GIFFORD 2010; GIULIANI 2003; LOW, ALTMAN 1992), and thus, it has been defined in a variety of ways, also due to the fact that thanks to its potential functions, this concept might be practically applied.

Various definitions of the concept and their operationalisation in numerous studies with regard to different aspects, forms, scales and factors of human interaction with places might be synthesised into a three-dimensional, person-process-place organising framework (see: SCANNELL, GIFFORD 2010). This particular approach corresponds well to the classic works by Y. F. TUAN (1974, 1977) and E. RELPH (1976), who believed that the concept of place is attributed to humankind, and without people it is only a geographical location. At the same time, it follows three dimensions of the interaction between humans and places, i.e.: cognitive (focused on perception of formal aspects of places), behavioural (pointing at functional aspects and types of activities) and emotional (focused on the meaning that people attach to places) widely discussed in literature. Additionally, considering two scales of human interaction with places (individual and group perspective), the person-process-place framework refers to the meanings of places determined by individuals, groups of people or whole communities. The place dimension of the framework emphasises the place characteristics of attachment and also reflects

necessity to consider both its physical and social features. (SCANNELL, GIFFORD 2010, p. 2-5). However, this particular distinction of ‘social’ and ‘physical’ is vague and unless it is treated as a starting point for a more elaborated theory, it does not add much to our understanding of processes of place attachment (cf. LEWICKA 2011). Place attachment can be different depending on people, their socio-cultural and economic background, length of stay in a place, social relations, spatial level, degree of distinctiveness and its social or physical features, and is manifested through affective (emotional), cognitive and behavioural psychological processes. Thus, the tripartite model of place attachment applied in this paper, should be recognised as summarising and generalising different theories and research in practice.

Methods

A broad range of data was collected. Multi-method studies, also referred to as mixed methods or methodological triangulation, allow for the generation of data from different sources (data triangulation) to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of the research question (BREWER, HUNTER 2006).

To design the study focused on thematisation of space as the way towards local development, preliminary desk research of literature and documents have been conducted. As a result, the timeline of all activities undertaken to establish the Goth Village in Masłomęcz has been prepared and presented. Furthermore, the anatomy of the action has been analysed to distinguish the main actors involved in particular phases.

The collection of primary data was conducted in the summer and autumn of 2018. At the beginning, a Focus Group activity was organised and conducted in Masłomęcz to gather community members, local stakeholders and experts and observe interactions between these groups of people, 16 in total. Issues addressed during the focus group activity referred to: 1) the first idea of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz and its links to

previous actions undertaken by the local community; 2) the implementation of the idea of the Goth Village in Maślomęcz; 3) the Goth Village Association gathering local community as a tool for the development of the locality; 4) the benefits acquired by the local community from the Goth Village; 5) Individuals and groups of people most intensively involved in the Goth Village; 6) formal procedures in the course of deployment of such projects and their realisation; 7) the role of the municipality / county in the support for such projects and their realisation; 8) role of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) in the support for the projects; 9) notions of “thematic village”; 10) future developmental priorities, improvements, visions and plans; 11) possibility to look for partners in other places (formation of a network).

Following the focus group interview, 9 in-depth individual interviews were carried out. The interviewees were: members of the tourism sector (two women running agritourist farms), the local leader, leaders and members of local NGOs (firemen, Farmers’ Wives Association, Goth Village Association), the mayor; the town councillor responsible for the tourism sector; the director of the Regional Museum in Hrubieszów.

The interviews were designed to take the form of a conversation guided by the researchers (KVALE, BRINKMANN 2009). The respondents were encouraged to talk freely on the prepared discussion points, which included questions over the mental mapping of the village surroundings as well as about the interviewees’ level of involvement in the Goth Village project and a discussion of the perceived strengths and weaknesses of undertaken activities. Some categories of questions were based on the person-place-process framework of place attachment to bring answers to shaping person-place relations in this particular village. The interviewees were asked to reveal their role and specific contribution to the establishment of the Goth Village in Maślomęcz and features of their character, competences, skills enabling them to stand up to the challenge of this

process. They were also encouraged to talk about the characteristics and distinctive features of their local community and main changes over time due to the establishment of the Goth Village in Maślomęcz (social, economic, landscape-related). The interviewees also referred to the lessons, learnt on the basis of their experiences, associated with the work on development of the Goth Village, their overall attitude towards their place of living and plans for the future. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed to become the basis for the qualitative content analysis and inductively interpreted later on with reference to the person-process-place framework.

Following the focus group activity and individual interviews, along with a research walk, the photographic documentation was collected. Finally, the authors participated in the Archaeological Fest – an annual one-day festival which takes place in the Goth Village on the last Sunday of July.

This primary data was further supplemented with quantitative and qualitative data from secondary sources, including the existing statistical data, to contextualise the local-level findings (Census data, local chronicles, newspapers and the municipality’s website).

The Case Study

Maślomęcz is a small but very dispersed village of about 400 inhabitants (100 households), located in Eastern Poland in the Lubelskie Voivodeship, not far from Hrubieszów and only 8 km from the boundary with Ukraine (Fig. 1). The area around Hrubieszów features splendid natural qualities and rich history of villages, with numerous palaces and manor houses, churches, chapels and shrines, mounds and tumuli – perfectly preserved in the typically farming landscape, where rivers Bug and Huczwa cross the soils, classified among the most fertile in Poland. Generally, current local economic activities are very poorly diversified, and the productive structure is still based mainly on farming, and particularly on the cultivation of wheat and sugar beets.

However, the very first moments in Maślomęcz appear – against the regional background – to disappoint. The former splendour of the village can only be seen in the partly preserved pattern of roads and field plots. There are no more traces of the manor farmyard, which served the property, composed of Maślomęcz and the neighbouring Czerniczyn villages, of the Uniate (Eastern Catholic) church, the primary school and the windmill, all of which existed at the beginning of the 20th century. There are no traces in space, nor in the memory of the inhabitants, who came to this area from other regions in a large part after World War II.

A complex set of political, historical and demographic factors marked the contemporary character of Maślomęcz. The former multicultural society, composed of Ruthenians, Poles and Jews have undergone during the war and the post-war period numerous processes, changing its structure. One of the most important among these processes was the resettlement of the Ukrainians from Poland to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the years 1945-1946 and the “Vistula” Operation in 1947, consisting in the resettlement of the Ruthenian population to the western and northern regions of Poland, as well as the settlement of the Polish population, repatriated from the USSR in the years 1944-1948 and later on in the 1950s. It is exactly the houses of the Polish settlers of the post-war years – small, identical houses of red brick, with an orchard, surrounded by fields, without fences – that constitute the distinguishing feature of the village nowadays (Photo 1).

A turn in the life of the village of Maślomęcz took place in 1977 when archaeologists from the Lublin University of Maria Curie-Skłodowska started excavations in Hrubieszów Valley. Between 1977 and 2002, they discovered a complex of Goth settlements and cemeteries from the 2nd-4th centuries. Initially distrustful of “strangers”, the residents of Maślomęcz slowly got used to the presence of archaeologists every summer. Their work, at first a new, unprecedented occurrence, became, as time passed, an element of the

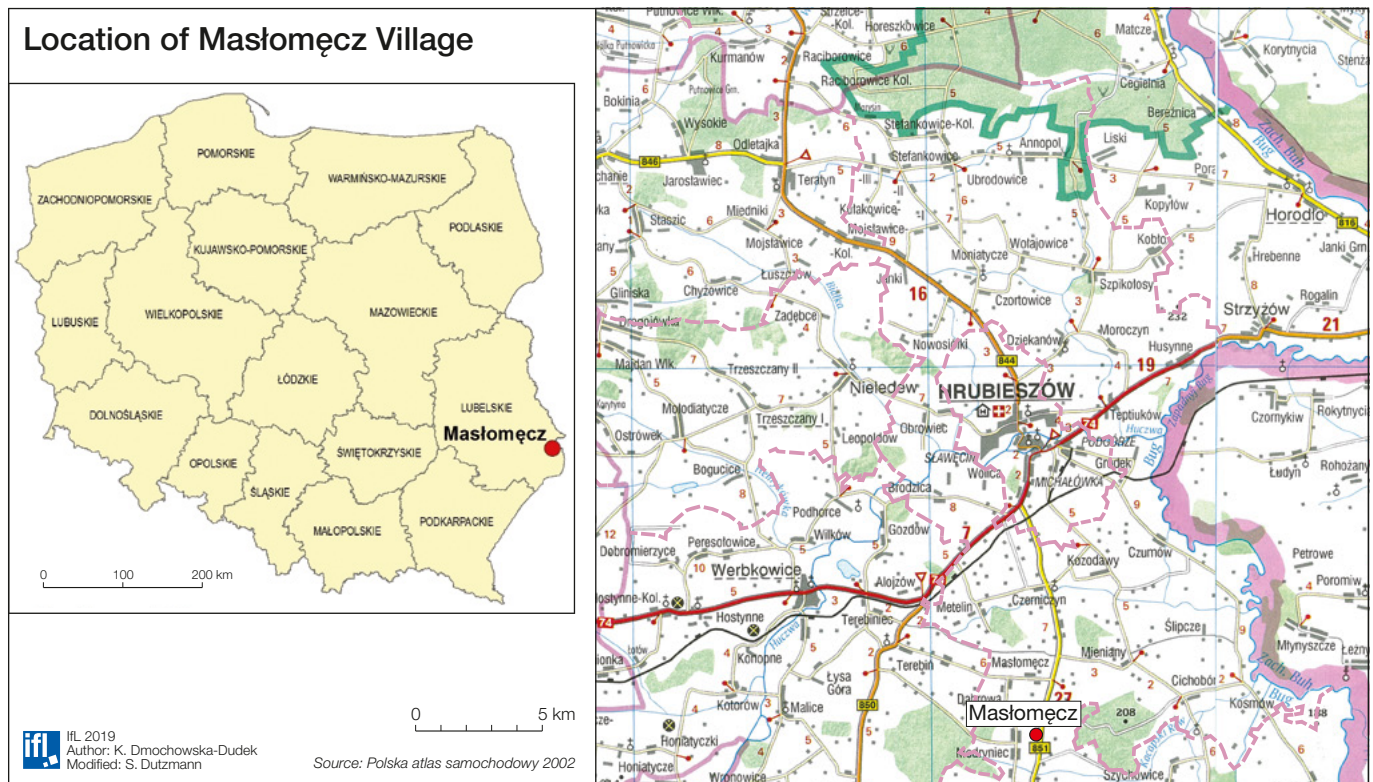


Fig. 1: Location of Masłomęcz Village



Photograph 1: An example of the home of the settlers in Masłomęcz (Tobiasz-Lis 2018)



Photograph 2: One of the traditional constructions in the Goth Village (P. Tobiasz-Lis 2018)



Photograph 3: A living history lesson in the Goth Village (P. Tobiasz-Lis 2018)



Photograph 4: Archaeological Fest in the Goth Village (T. Napierała 2018)



Photograph 5: Reconstruction of the traditional constructions in the Goth Village (P. Tobiasz-Lis 2018)

annual life cycle of the community, until then dictated only by the natural cycles, farming and family activities. Professor A. Kokowski brings back in his books the unusual relations, which developed between the residents and the archaeologists in the village of Masłomęcz. After a couple of years, every excavation season ended with a collective fest of the archaeologists and the local community. This tradition is continued, and the Archaeological Fest is nowadays the most important regular event, organised in Masłomęcz by the Goth Village Association (Kokowski 2014).

The Goth Village Association was formally established in 2010, although the local community started to be involved

in the reconstruction and promotion of the cultural and historical heritage of the region in 2004, in response to concluding 25-year-long archaeological excavations and a void, sense of loss they had after the last season in 2002. In effect, after Professor Kokowski's idea to bring archaeology and Goths back to Masłomęcz, a partnership of the residents, NGOs and authorities was set up in the form of a Local Action Group called "Better Tomorrow". Their initial plan was to use the historical and cultural heritage of Goths to develop tourist attractions and services. In 2006, a wooden hut with a straw roof was constructed on a plot of land purchased by the Hrubieszów municipality, serving as a

careful reconstruction in the scale of 1:2. It was a Goth hut from the 3rd-4th centuries. This structure constituted the beginning of the "Goth Village", an open-air museum which is continuously developed and aims to present examples of everyday activities of ancient Goths along living history lessons, workshops and fests (Photos 2-5). Between 2007 and 2009, a few projects were realised, focusing on the historical education of the inhabitants of the village and shaping their skills in arts and crafts typical for ancient Goths. In 2009, "the Goth Squad" was established with support from young archaeologists, Professor Kokowski's students, who obtained jobs in the regional museum in

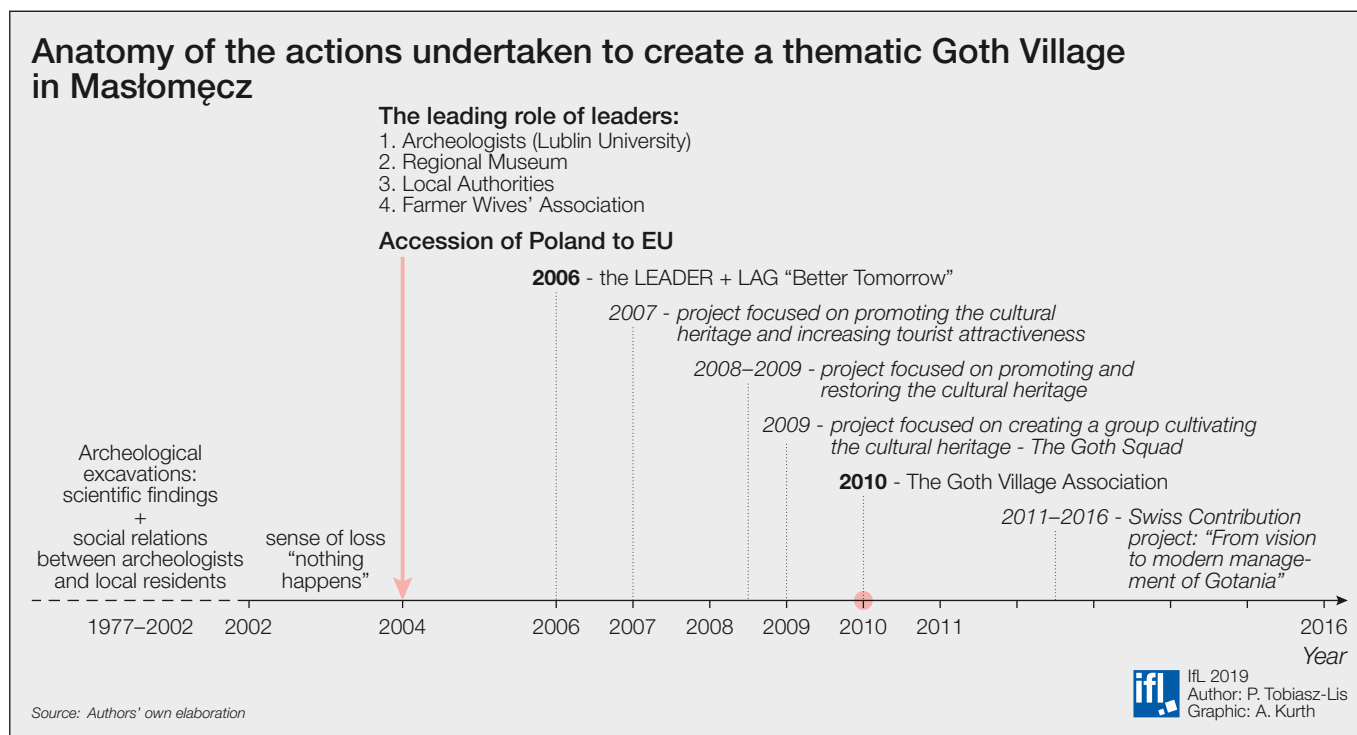


Fig. 2: An anatomy of the actions undertaken to create a thematic Goth Village in Masłomęcz

Hrubieszów. Nowadays, the Squad gathers about 30 persons of various age, who, after a series of trainings with the professionals – experienced craftsmen, specialists in reconstruction, and under the supervision of the employees of the regional museum in Hrubieszów, reconstruct with archaeological accuracy the crafts, everyday life rituals and martial arts of the ancient Goths. This local social initiative was noticed by the media as well as the neighbouring municipalities, and became a new symbol of the region.

In 2009, after a visit of the Swiss Contribution representatives in Masłomęcz, the municipality of Hrubieszów received considerable financial support for the project "From a vision to modern management of the Gothania region", whose purpose was to create a tourist brand of the entire region and stimulate the residents in economic terms (Fig. 2). All the tasks in the programme have already been successfully implemented and reflected in the local development of the village and the community.

The institutionalisation of undertakings that consist in thematisation of a presented village resulted in excellent effects, both social and economic, together with

the creation of new landscape forms. The Goth Village in Masłomęcz consolidated the local community anew.

A new identity of the village took shape around the culture of Goths. Its formal organiser is the municipality of Hrubieszów, but substantive supervision and scientific coordination is carried out by the Museum in Hrubieszów together with the Institute of Archaeology of the Marie Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin. The Goth Village Association is preparing the workshops and the expositions of the ancient craftsmanship. The open-air exhibition contains the reconstructions of several structures (a Goth hut, a semi-dugout, a weaver's hut, a hut of a warrior-merchant and a farmyard of a pot maker), conform to various technologies of the Roman period (Photo 2).

These structures serve not only as the background for the cyclic open-air events but are also used in conducting living history lessons, during which ancient crafts are shown and exercised, martial arts shows are organised, along with the presentations of the ancient art of cooking (Photo 3, 4).

The Goth Village is a fundamental element, generating the organised tourist

traffic towards Masłomęcz and is an important element in the realisation of the multifunctional development of the village. Every year it is visited by approximately 5-6 thousand people. However, the Archaeological Fest organised on the last Sunday in July, draws the attention of about 2-3 thousand tourists itself. The open-air museum around which a new centre of the scattered settlement keeps developing is filled with new facilities and events, and thus becomes the heart of the village – not only the natural meeting place of the community but also their commonplace to identify with, work on and realise new ideas (Photo 5).

It is an extraordinary example of grass-roots actions and social stimulation of village residents who identify with the Goth tribe that lived there 1700 years ago, strengthen their social and territorial ties.

The Goth Village development is accompanied by the establishment of two agri-tourism farms where, in addition to accommodation and a variety of services (bike and ATV rental, horse riding), one can buy and taste local products. Vegetables, mushrooms, fruit, juice, honey and liqueurs delight with their colour and

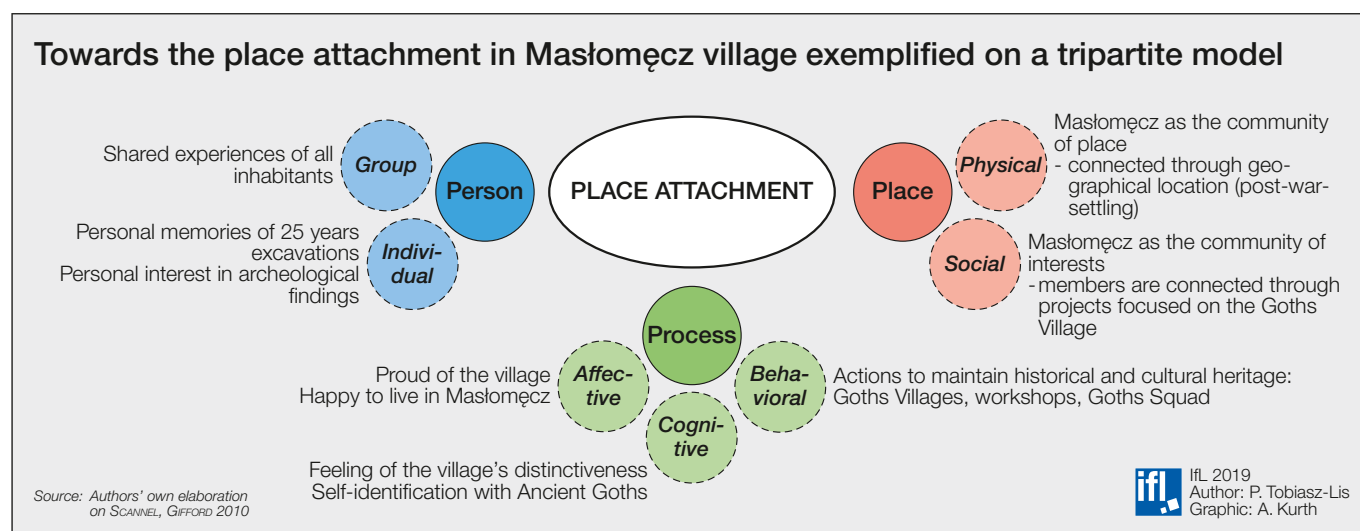


Fig. 3: Towards place attachment in the village of Masłomęcz exemplified on a tripartite model

taste. The Masłomęcz shop located next to the Goth Village sells several kinds of Gothic beer with labels featuring a drawing of a Gothic cottage and the symbol of Gothania.

Results

Among the social effects of thematisation of rural spaces observed in the village of Masłomęcz were: 1) development of social interest in the village's past, 2) development of new skills, social relations, 3) development of strong local and regional identity. From the perspective of local economies, creating this thematic village was: 1) the trigger for the multifunctional development, 2) a possibility to develop new economic activities (entrepreneurship), local products, events. Actions undertaken in this village also made visible the footprints on its landscape bringing new forms and architectural dominants as well as new "central places" (centres) of Masłomęcz.

People in Masłomęcz perceive the Goth Village as a new, beautiful and characteristic (symbolical) place. They associate it with development and a meeting place for all inhabitants. They like to spend their time there and evaluate it very high from various perspectives: as being essential for the local development of the village and the local community, effective in its actions and of quite long-term effects. When asked for adjectives best describing

the Goth Village, they listed: *interesting, useful, open for everybody, being the source of pride for the people of Masłomęcz*. It should be underlined that what emerged from the interviews carried along this study goes in line with what has already been found by many scholars about the importance of such aspects as leadership, local assets and the role of education in developing a thematic village. Furthermore, interviewees highlight that the projects have brought about new skills and opportunities to share them with others as well as a greater sense of community and place attachment.

Leaders – archaeologists in Masłomęcz – were the first factor to form a group and to impart adequate dynamics of implementing new ideas, which seems to confirm prior conclusions of W. IDZIAK ET AL (2015) who claimed that expert external assistance might be necessary at key stages, especially by providing professional knowledge of markets and marketing. However, professional experts in Masłomęcz (archaeologists) are not perceived as "external" by the local community. After the excavations carried out for 25 years around the village, they have become "*ones of us*". As a consequence, Professor A. Kokowski, and later his graduates working in the Regional Museum, had and still have a strong mandate to represent the local community of Masłomęcz and set ideas for the

development of the Goth Village. In this particular case, the theme for the village also came as the natural consequence of archaeological excavations. When ultimately finalised in 2002, they brought the sense of loss and longing for actions to bring it back in a new form: "*Nothing was happening when they (archaeologists) left. Our village was just like all the others. With nothing interesting, distinguishing. Life became boring (...)*" (Member of the Goth Village Association). Leaders were needed here as a trigger to start the process, and the local community was ready to work together. "*When archaeological excavations finish, nothing is left behind. All exhibits go to museums and holes in the ground are filled up (...)* In Masłomęcz, people were eager to keep the archaeology in the village, and we decided to help them (...) A very active and successful Farmers' Wives Association was the first partner to work with over the project" (Chair of the Goth Village Association). Then formal institutions and civic organisations (the Regional Museum, the Lublin University, the Goth Village Association) became important to stimulate and integrate visions within the social activity. The latter formalisation of the Goth Village Association, imparting it with a legal and organisational dimension, led in consequence to gradual creation of physical forms for carrying out ideas (infrastructure) and reproduction of activity, especially concerning

cyclical cultural events. *“What is most important for us and we care for is to keep the village authentic and historically correct”* (Chair of the Goth Village Association). Of special significance are, in particular, such undertakings as the development of the Goth Squad uniting residents over common history, interests and activities aimed at popularising the historical and cultural heritage of the village. A special teaching curriculum in schools concerning the most ancient history of the region or organisation of contests on the subject of the culture of Goths is also vital. They encourage new generations of people in the region to become enthusiastic about archaeology and contribute to their feeling of pride about their place of birth.

Comparing the case of Masłomęcz with the person-process-place framework of place attachment, it might be stated that all dimensions of the bond between the village and its residents are strengthened in this particular location (Fig. 3). As to the dimension of person, at the individual level interviewees mentioned their memories of excavations, summer feasts with archaeology students, and the fame of the village at these times due to the discovered past. However, these experiences, as well as these about post-war resettlements and constructing the village (the place and the social ties) anew, were common for all interviewed members of the community. The three psychological aspects of place attachment typically highlighted in its various theoretical and operational definitions are affect, cognition and behaviour. Affect is thought to be of a central role in the person-place bond, and indeed positive emotions about the village of Masłomęcz appear in all interviews. People are proud of the village, happy to live there and to be a part of this place. They identify themselves with Ancient Goths, also by joining the Goth Squad, which is an example of place attachment as cognition. The third aspect of the psychological process dimension of place attachment is the behavioural level, in which attachment is expressed through actions engaging members of the community – in Masłomęcz these might

be actions undertaken by the members of the Goth Squad, e.g. Archeological Fest, living history lessons, construction of new elements of the village’s space. Perhaps the most critical dimension of place attachment is the place itself. The term “community of place” is of very high relevance here because it describes social ties rooted in place, such as the Goth Village that supports social interactions.

An interesting theoretical alternative was suggested by BECKLEY (2003) who distinguished between two groups of factors responsible for place attachment: anchors (factors which prevent people from moving from a place) and magnets (factors which attract people to a place). This distinction is simple but theoretically inspiring and relevant to the social-physical dimension of place in the model presented by SCANNEL and GIFFORD (2010). Social and community factors might be understood as anchors rather than magnets, while the opposite may be true for the physical assets of places. In the case of the Goth Village in Masłomęcz, this particular initiative might be seen as both an anchor – as a centre for social activities and the result of joint activities of all inhabitants, and the magnet – as a new physical form in cultural landscape of the village distinguishing it from the neighbouring settlements.

A set of favourable conditions and opportunities have allowed the Goth Village to become a relevant sociocultural development actor in the locality. In this particular case, the identification and use of specific assets were of key importance, combined with critical incentives in the form of process creators (experts) and subsequent possibilities of financing the entire initiative (e.g. EU funds). Adjustment to the “place” in the process of thematisation of space resulted from the cooperation of the local community with external stakeholders: local authorities of the Commune of Hrubieszów and experts. With their help, specific assets of the environment were identified to develop further local stories, related to the original motif. The main promoters influencing the scope and impact of the

Goth Village as a tool for local development are:

- an authentic theme for developing the thematic village (ancient history of the area);
- mutual trust of the local community and external actors (archaeologists) enabling the use of the results of archaeological excavations in the village as the development asset;
- strategic capacity of the Goth Village Association members in defining, reflecting and pursuing their aims to build up a platform for sociocultural activities in Masłomęcz;
- learning capacity of the association, including its flexibility and adaptability to react effectively when opportunities arise (for instance, through funding programmes).

Apart from these internal factors, which are related to the set-up and management of the association, further supporting factors play a role:

- organisational and conceptual support of the community of Hrubieszów, Regional Museum in Hrubieszów and Lublin University of Marie Curie-Skłodowska,
- positive influence of EU funding programmes on the strategic development of the association into a sociocultural development actor.

As the main inhibitors influencing the scope and impact of the Goth Village we might conclude:

- peripheral location of Masłomęcz and the Goth Village which allows for its interaction only within the region (Lubelskie voivodeship).
- seasonal character of the Goth Village activities – the open-air museum is opened for organised groups (children from schools, kindergartens) and individual visitors between May and October.
- demographic crisis in rural areas (especially in peripheries) hinders generational replacement among the members of the Goth Squad involved in the action of the Goth Village.

From the presented case study, three issues emerge, all of which are closely inter-related and significant for local development, community integration and place attachment. The first issue was creating social ties within the community as well as with external actors and leaders (increased trust and growth of social capital). The second issue was the 'cascade effect' of the first projects in the community, which led to the creation of many other initiatives. The third issue was bringing together areas and sectors that had previously been disconnected (breaking down barriers between the local community, professionals, local stakeholders, entrepreneurs).

Discussion and conclusion

Among the numerous elements which contribute together to the originality of the described village to use thematisation of space as a mean for the local development, we can point out the universal ones, without which this process would not stand a chance of success. The "cultural roots" are strengthened or start to grow anew when, first of all, people are capable of delivering the foundations for the appearance of "mutual trust" – the cornerstone of any society. Rural social relations, which become the engine of various undertakings, are based mainly on the neighbourhood and family environments. A factor which is constitutive for the group, and which endows it with appropriate dynamics, is represented by the leader or leaders. Their philanthropic work for the sake of the community, along with the strong bonds they have with particular places, is a guarantee for the local society that adequate protection is extended over the concept. The space of activation of the community is formed by the organisations and institutions, which are the stabilisers of the vision and the character of the social activity. Their formalisation as well as the definition of their legal and organisational dimensions, leads, consequently, to the determination of the actual development strategy, to gradual creation of the physical forms for the implementation of ideas

(infrastructure), and to the reproduction of activity, especially in the sphere of definite cyclic returns of the events (e.g. in the framework of the annual calendar of events).

Observation of the processes of broadly conceived rural renewal under the thematisation of the village of Masłomęcz presented in the paper allows for the definition of two essential cultural contexts of the creation and use of rural space (WÓJCIK 2017). The first of these is associated with the fulfilment of the endogenous functions, that is – maintenance of memory and cultural identity of the village, oriented towards the past, the refreshment of the local or regional stories as the condition for the continued existence of the communities, with their adequate rooting in a definite territory. The second context relates to the development of the exogenous functions, especially tourism and recreation, which, in the conviction of numerous municipal authorities, are supposed to contribute to economic strengthening of the self-governmental bodies, promotion of the respective area, as well as multi-functional development (and, consequently, to the improvement in the quality of life of the inhabitants). It corresponds to the demands of the contemporary times, i.e. it is most often the expression of consumption of the rural environment, regeneration of the human organisms, which are provided a shot of emotional impressions and the possibility of physical compensation over a short period. The first of the contexts plays the sensitising role, forming the atmosphere of calm and reflexion, while the second one refers, in particular, to the function of movement and social mobility.

These contexts, as specific descriptions of the state and condition of "rurality" in Poland, tell a lot not only about the complexity of the contemporary cultural processes, forming our consciousness, but also trigger off the thought of the balance between human memory and the consciousness of the creative development of the cultural heritage on the one hand, and on the other hand, the need of consuming goods and services, including the

development of tourism, which has accelerated in recent years. This double-folded context should be regarded as securing the real opportunity for the introduction of the principles of sustainable development, such that equilibrium is preserved not only concerning the relations between the systemic elements (man and environment), but also regarding the specific perception of time and its cultural meanings (persistence and change). Thus, we strongly believe that there is a need for the further theoretical considerations as well as empirical projects focused on both contexts in the future research

What was observed in the presented case of Masłomęcz and seems to be a universal mechanism is the fact that adjustment to the "place" in the process of thematisation of space, results from the cooperation of the local community with its nearest environment, which consists in analysing and interpreting the existing conditions about the planned changes. Then, the specific assets of the environment should be identified to develop further local stories, related to the original motif. Those original concepts constitute an extraordinary act of creation of the place and its adjustment to the needs of the local community and visitors. In this particular case, the identification and use of specific resources were of key importance, combined with critical external incentives in the form of process creators (experts) and subsequent possibilities of financing the entire initiative (e.g. EU funds).

The case studies of the local communities, developing good practices in the domain of self-development, social self-organisation and reconstruction of the local identity are an essential way to uncover the essence of the social world and to attempt to comprehend the specific features of "rurality" in its new contexts and interpretations. The grassroots initiatives of the inhabitants, strengthened in many instances with the possibility of acquiring funds for the local development, play a particular role as a definite reaction to the processes of destruction of the rural identity in conditions of the imposed concepts of rural urbanisation as the way

of modernising the countryside nowadays. The construction of the new “rurality” constitutes consumption patterns which dominate the mass culture and are promoted, in particular, by the domestic and foreign mass media. Social activity is reduced, as a consequence, to an execution of certain investment projects, which serve to adapt physically (e.g. through the revitalisation of the individual items) and symbolically (by describing the meaning) the rural space to the new functions.

The essence of the return to the roots, taken in this particular space, is constituted by the uncovering of local meanings, which emerge in the course of complex relations between nature and people. Focusing on the local culture allows for interpretation of a village as a “place”, an original construct. Paying attention to the singular facts, stories of the life of people, intertwined in the specific conditions of the place – related to nature and culture, makes a highly fascinating and, at the same time, necessary perspective to describe, explain and interpret local development in the future research.

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Резюме

ПАУЛИНА ТОБИАС-ЛИС, МАРЧИН ВОЙЧИК, КАРОЛИНА ДОМОХОВСКАЯ-ДУДЕК, ПАМЕЛА ЕЖИОРСКА-БИЛЬ

Тематическая деревня как новый якорь для местного развития. Лекция из Масломенч, Польша

Суть проблемы, представленной в данном документе, заключается в определении социальной деятельности, ориентированной на конкретную тему, институционализации этой деятельности и ее различных культурных, экономических и ландшафтных эффектов. Специально для этой цели была выбрана деревня Масломенч (Люблинское воеводство) более чем из 50 активных тематических деревень Польши. Она служит примером непрекращающихся изменений за пределами периферийных областей с проблемными социальными условиями и сложной историей. В деревне существует проблема послевоенного поселения людей из разных частей страны и их долгой и мучительной адаптации к новым условиям жизни. Процесс преодоления культурной неприспособленности населения к новому дому длился годами и сопровождался такими негативными аспектами, как разрушение культурного наследия из-за неосведомленности о его ценности или элементарной нехватки знаний и соответствующих навыков.

Данная работа основана на количественных и качественных данных, собранных как в полевых условиях (наблюдение, индивидуальные углубленные интервью, фокус-группа, исследовательские экскурсии), так и на вторичных исследованиях (изучение литературы, документов о стратегиях местного развития). Многопоточный анализ в местном масштабе деревни и ее ближайшего соседства позволил представить анатомию действий, предпринятых для создания тематической Деревни Готов в Масломенче, и ее влияние на местное сообщество, экономику и пространство.

Тематическая деревня; местное развитие; место прикреплённости; сельское пространство; Польша

Résumé

Un village thématique comme nouveau point d'ancrage du développement local. Un enseignement de Maślomęcz, en Pologne

Le problème présenté dans l'article consiste à identifier les activités sociales locales axées sur un sujet spécifique, l'institutionnalisation de ces activités et leurs nombreuses répercussions culturelles, économiques et paysagères. C'est notamment pour cette raison que le village de Maślomęcz (Voïdovie de Lublin) a été sélectionné parmi plus de 50 villages thématiques de Pologne. Il permet d'illustrer les multiples adaptations au-delà des régions périphériques dans un contexte social problématique et avec une histoire compliquée. Le village a connu les difficultés d'après-guerre, notamment les problèmes d'installation de personnes originaires des quatre coins du pays et leur adaptation longue et douloureuse à ce nouvel environnement de vie. Il a fallu des années avant de réussir à surmonter cette non-adaptation culturelle de la population, entraînant entre-temps des conséquences négatives, tels que la destruction de certains héritages culturels due à l'ignorance de leur valeur ou simplement à un manque de connaissances et de compétences adéquates.

L'article est basé sur des données quantitatives et qualitatives recueillies à la fois sur le terrain (observations, entretiens individuels et approfondis, groupes de discussion, excursions) et grâce à des recherches documentaires (étude d'ouvrages littéraires, documents sur les stratégies de développement local). L'analyse, à volets multiples et à l'échelle locale, d'un village et de ses alentours a permis de présenter les différentes étapes qui ont abouti à la création du village des Goths à Maślomęcz ainsi que l'impact de ce dernier sur la communauté, l'économie et l'espace locaux.

Village thématique; développement local; attachement à un lieu; milieu rural; Pologne